

This Week in Congress

June 14, 2010

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." This week's headlines are:

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Thanking Kansas VFW Members For Serving Our Nation

A strong national defense is critical to the security of our country. I am grateful to the many Kansans who have answered the call to serve our nation. On Saturday morning in Topeka, I thanked many of these veterans and their families at the Kansas VFW State Convention. I also took the opportunity to update them on veterans' issues being considered by Congress. I spoke about protecting the VA health care system from President Obama and Speaker Pelosi's health care reform, a new transportation grant program for veterans' groups to help transport rural veterans to VA medical facilities, and efforts to lower the disability claims backlog at the VA. I also thanked State Commander, Phil Irby of Junction City, for his service and leadership during his year-long term and I congratulated the State Senior Vice Commander, J.T. Plummer of Stockton, on his new role as State Commander. Thanks again to Phil for the kind invitation to address the members.

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Discussing Implementation of 2008 Farm Bill Energy Title

On Thursday, the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit, Energy, and Research held a hearing to review the implementation of the 2008 Farm Bill energy title. During

the hearing, I pressed the FSA Administrator on the need to quickly determine a date for a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup. In Kansas, a substantial amount of CRP acres are set to expire on September 30, 2010. If FSA does not announce a signup date soon, it could affect retention rates as some farmers in Kansas are eligible to start destroying cover on expiring contracts on July 1st.

I also raised concerns over the current eligibility requirements for Section 9005 Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels. Despite acknowledgement from Secretary Tom Vilsack at a hearing in April that concerns existed surrounding the eligibility requirements, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) decided to make funds available in the current fiscal year without first resolving existing eligibility issues through the rule making process. This move by USDA will make ineligible in fiscal year 2010 otherwise eligible U.S. biofuels companies that employ U.S. workers, buy U.S. feedstocks, and sell U.S. biofuels.

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Meeting with the Kansas State Rifle Association

On Saturday, I joined members of the Kansas State Rifle Association at their annual meeting in Hutchinson. It was great to be among so many friends of freedom and limited government. Protecting the Second Amendment right of Americans to keep and bear arms has never been more important. Washington, DC has lost sight of what the Founding Fathers envisioned our

federal government to be. Our Founders created a Bill of Rights to our Constitution to guarantee that American citizens can live in freedom without government intrusion. But with the passage of each gun control law, each health care reform, and each bailout, our government expands at the expense of our freedoms. We cannot allow dependency on government to replace personal responsibility. Our liberty, especially the fundamental freedom of American citizens to keep and bear arms, is far too important.

During the event, I updated KSRA members on gun rights and gun control legislation under consideration by Congress. I also spoke about my introduction of the Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act, to prevent veterans from being wrongly denied their right to purchase and possess firearms. This legislation reforms a Department of Veterans Affairs process that arbitrarily strips the gun rights of veterans who receive assistance managing their financial affairs. Special thanks to KSRA President Patricia Stoneking for the invitation to speak and for her strong advocacy on Second Amendment issues. [Click here](#) to view a photo from the event.



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Congress Must Impose Additional Sanctions on Iran

After months of deliberation and delay, the United Nations Security Council finally passed a resolution this week to sanction Iran for its refusal to suspend its nuclear program. During the time it took to get an agreement on this resolution, Iran almost doubled its stock of low-enriched uranium and made advancements in its nuclear program. Just recently, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran has produced enough fuel to make two atomic weapons.

Time is running out. Congress needs to supplement U.N. sanctions with our own strong and comprehensive sanctions in order to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. The President also needs to use existing authority from previous sanctions to put added pressure on Iran.

Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons is one of the greatest threats to peace and security we

currently face. A nuclear-armed Iran is a threat to American troops in the region and Israel. It would likely embolden terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah and could lead to a perilous nuclear arms race in the Middle East. I have spoken to the House of Representatives about the Iranian nuclear threat eight times since the beginning of 2009 in an effort to make sure the seriousness of this threat is understood. I will continue to push for congressional passage and implementation of strong and comprehensive sanctions. [Click here](#) to read more about the need for sanctions. [Click here](#)

to watch my most recent speech to the House about the Iranian threat.

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Meeting with Kansas Governor's Military Council

This week, I spoke to members of the Governor's Military Council during their visit to Washington, D.C. Formed by the Governor's office in 2006, the Governor's Military Council is made up of appointed military and community leaders and charged with supporting members of the military stationed in Kansas and strengthening the military's presence in our state. We discussed our efforts to grow the Great Plains Joint Training Center at Salina, growth

opportunities across the state and efforts to meet the needs of Kansas veterans.

Thanks to Executive Director John Armbrust, Lana Oleen, State Senator Roger Reitz and Linda Weis of Manhattan; Alonzo Harrison and Doug Kinsinger of Topeka; and John Montgomery and Scott Stuckey of Junction City.

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Challenging President Obama's Health Care Reform Law

I gave my support this week to a legal effort spearheaded by the American Center for Law and Justice in support of Virginia's legal challenge to President Obama's health care reform law. The legal brief I supported demonstrates that the individual mandate in the new law is unconstitutional because it goes well beyond the enumerated powers granted to Congress by our Constitution. I am opposed to the law's individual mandate requiring individuals to carry a certain level of health insurance as defined by the federal government. This mandate is an unprecedented form of federal action because never before has the government required people to buy a good or service as a condition of living in the U.S. [Click here](#) to read this brief.

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Celebrating Kansas Artists at the Smoky Hill River Festival

On Saturday, I enjoyed spending the afternoon with fellow Kansans at the 34th annual Smoky Hill River Festival, held in Salina's Oakdale Park. This annual festival is a project of the Salina Arts and Humanities Commission and brings together artists to exhibit and sell their arts and crafts. In addition to the beautiful art displays, the festival had something for everyone to enjoy, from musical performances, to games, to food and many children's activities. During my visit, I stopped by the "Friends of the River Foundation" booth to learn more about the Smoky Hill River Renewal Project. It was good to visit with them again and hear about their efforts to restore the natural channel of the Smoky Hill River. Thanks to the Salina Arts and Humanities Commission, the city of Salina and the many event organizers and volunteers for putting together such a terrific event. [Click here](#) to see a photo from the Festival.

